

Congressman Tim Bishop
Public Testimony on Broadwater Proposal
January 11, 2007

I would like to thank the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the New York State Department of State for holding this hearing.

I regret that I am not able to attend in person, as the House of Representatives is currently in session.

I would especially like to thank each of the concerned citizens who have taken the time to attend this public hearing. Since the Broadwater proposal was first announced in November, 2004, many dedicated citizens have voiced their concerns. I applaud each of them for devoting their precious time and energy toward protecting the Long Island Sound.

It should be telling to this panel that the majority of citizens impacted by this project, as well as almost all their elected officials, are opposed to it. These citizens and officials affected by Broadwater did not come to this process with any preconceptions. Indeed, two years ago, most of us had never heard of a Liquid Natural Gas terminal or were familiar with its abbreviation, LNG. In that time, however, we have concluded that Broadwater is not in the best interests of our region.

Some believe that opposition to Broadwater means opposition to energy and opposition to progress. That couldn't be further from the truth. My opposition to Broadwater is based on the fact that it falls short on a cost-benefit analysis. Broadwater is not the best choice for our community and is fundamentally unnecessary. Moreover, I believe that we should not industrialize the Long Island Sound.

Let me share some of my specific concerns:

First and foremost, I am concerned about safety. As Broadwater proponents point out, the overall increase to the number of vessels into the Long Island Sound would be nominal. However, the more relevant number is the 20-30 percent increase in foreign flagged vessels in the Sound, which require greater security. According to the Coast Guard's Waterways Suitability Report, this would necessitate additional resources, including a Patrol Boat for 900-1800 hours, a number of boat crews, security boarding teams, and facility inspectors. With the Coast Guard's vital port security as well as its search and rescue missions already overextended, I am concerned that Broadwater's presence in Long Island Sound could overburden the Coast Guard's capabilities.

There is also the unresolved issue of the lack of fire-fighting capability in the Sound as well as other security precautions needed to prevent accidents and defend the platform from terrorist attacks.

Perhaps the region's greatest concern is Broadwater's uncertain impact on the environment. I remain unmoved by the FERC's initial finding that Broadwater is "environmentally acceptable." The Long Island Sound is an estuary of national significance, with hundreds of millions of dollars invested into restoring water quality.

There are considerable environmental risks to drawing millions of gallons of seawater each day for various operations, and expelling warmer, chlorinated water into this already distressed body of water. This type of industrial development and environmental threat is inconsistent with the New York Department of State's waterway plan, which has focused on improving the Long Island Sound. It is also next to impossible for the FERC to make these assessments with any degree of certainty, given no other similar facility has ever been constructed. The fact that we are considering this type of experiment in an estuary of national significance should raise a number of red flags with state and federal regulators.

Finally, I am very concerned with the proposed 1.5 mile exclusion zone surrounding Broadwater. While I understand that this zone is needed for safety, I am deeply concerned by the idea of a private company owning and walling off a portion of the Long Island Sound. I do not like the precedent of putting surface development into the Sound and excluding recreational boaters and fishermen.

All of these facts would be concerning, if not disqualifying, if Broadwater were the only means of delivering energy to Long Island and our region. However, that is simply not the case.

The Islander East pipeline can help meet our area's energy demand. Additionally, there are a number of more reasonable and potentially successful near-term options, including the upgraded Maritimes and Northeast (M&N) pipeline, which will deliver gas from at least two LNG import terminals already under construction in eastern Canada.

When it comes to security, the environment and the management of the Sound, all efforts seem designed to accommodate Broadwater, rather than the other way around. Rather than simply considering how we can best accommodate Broadwater, I ask you to take a step back and ask more basic questions. Is Broadwater necessary? Is Broadwater consistent with our efforts to protect the Long Island Sound? Is Broadwater the best answer to meet our region's energy needs? I believe the answer to all three is a resounding no.

I thank you for your time, and I hope you will listen closely to the voices of our community tonight and in the days ahead. Thank you.